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SUBJECT: NEPAL: MAOIST ACTIVITIES CONTINUE DESPITE NEW
GOVERNMENT, PEACE FEELERS

REF: A. (A) KATHMANDU 2025

[1](#)B. (B) KATHMANDU 1970

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (SBU) This message updates Maoist activities since the October 11 appointment of Prime Minister Lokendra Bahadur Chand. Efforts by Chand's Cabinet to initiate dialogue with the insurgents have so far succeeded in lessening neither the Maoists' violent activities nor their anti-government rhetoric. A Maoist-affiliated trade union has declared a general strike in the Kathmandu Valley for October 28. The National Human Rights Commission issued statements condemning violations by both the Maoists and the security forces. End summary.

PEACE FEELERS

[1](#)2. (SBU) The newly installed interim government of Prime Minister Lokendra Bahadur Chand is letting it be known, both publicly and privately, that it is attempting to find ways to restart dialogue with the Maoists, whose violent insurgency has cost the lives of more than 5,500 Nepalis. The Maoists' response to these overtures so far, at least publicly, has been cool, resulting in neither a reduction in their violent activities nor any tempering of their heated anti-government rhetoric. Many observers expect the insurgents to string the new government along for as long as possible, neither accepting nor rejecting negotiations, while continuing to seek advantage from deep divisions between mainstream political parties and the caretaker Cabinet appointed by the King.

TRADE UNION DECLARES BANDH

[1](#)3. (U) In addition to the previously announced November 11-13 general strike, or "bandh," a press release from the Maoist-affiliated trade union, received by the media October 23, threatened a Kathmandu Valley bandh for October 28 unless a list of 24 demands, presented to the Labor Ministry and selected businessmen, were met. The demands include a 100 percent increase in the minimum wage, free accommodations and medical care for workers, and free education for workers' children.

CIVILIAN TOLL

[1](#)4. (U) The insurgents have killed more than 250 civilians since the beginning of the year, including 21 during the month of October. Their victims range from teachers to local political workers to hapless passersby. On October 12 a bomb set by suspected Maoists at a statue of late King Mahendra in downtown Kathmandu killed one bystander and injured several others. On October 17 a gang of armed Maoists abducted Mohan Bahadur Khatri, a retired Army major, from a hotel he owned in eastern Nepal, then shot and stabbed him to death. Khatri was respected as a social worker who supported educational, medical clinics, and drinking water projects in the area of rural Sindhupalchowk where he had built his resort. On October 19 a bomb in a busy street in the Kathmandu Valley town of Banepa killed a female vegetable vendor whose sales supported two young children. A bomb set in an auto parts store in downtown Kathmandu the evening of October 23 injured eight, many of them waiting outside at a nearby bus stop. On October 21 armed villagers in eastern Dolakha District secured the release of five men who had been abducted by the Maoists several days earlier. Local press reports on October 19 noted a skyrocketing dropout rate among school-aged youth in Rukum District. The report attributed the phenomenon to increased out-migration from the district by youths

attempting to avoid Maoist conscription.

TOLL ON INFRASTRUCTURE

15. (U) According to a recently completed USAID study, Maoist attacks on hydropower facilities over the past seven months have left nearly 132,000 Nepalis without electricity. Maoist attacks on telecommunications infrastructure have left 19 of Nepal's 75 districts with no telephone service. The insurgents have particularly focused their destructive activities on the mid-western Maoist heartland, cutting off 200 Village Development Committees (VDCs) from telephone in the past year alone.

OPERATIONS AGAINST EXTORTION

16. (U) According to local press reports, one civilian was killed in crossfire when the Royal Nepal Army (RNA) engaged a large band of Maoists attempting to conscript recruits from a village in Syangja District in central Nepal October 18-20. Acting on reports of Maoist extortion in Bardiya District in southwestern Nepal, the RNA mounted an operation resulting in the deaths of 15 reported Maoists in the area. (Note: The largest food distributor in Nepal, who owns a warehouse in the area, confirmed to us that Maoist extortion and looting had worsened so much that he was considering closing his operations there. End note.) Reacting to RNA proscriptions against local merchants supplying food to suspected Maoists in the Maoist heartland, the insurgents have slapped a counter-ban on the import of food to the headquarters of Rukum District. As a result, severe food shortages among the general population are being reported in Rukum and neighboring areas. Many residents--including, according to some reports, civil servants in the area--are leaving the vicinity and moving south, where food is more readily available.

RIGHTS COMMISSION FAULTS BOTH SIDES

17. (U) On October 22 the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) issued a press release citing the security forces for staged encounters; excessive force, including torture; illegal detention; and insensitivity to "the basic needs of education, food and health rights of the people in (the security forces') bid to curb the facilities of the Maoists." The release was based on investigations conducted in 35 districts. Presenting a summary of its findings to PM Chand, the NHRC urged him to halt the violations and "declare a cease fire and lead the process towards peace."

18. (U) The NHRC followed up its presentation to Chand with an October 23 letter to Maoist leader Prachanda noting insurgents' violations of the Geneva Convention. The Commission specifically asked him to stop the indiscriminate killing, torture and abduction of civilians and unarmed security personnel; destruction of infrastructure and development projects; and terrorizing of teachers and students. The letter also urged an end to recruitment of children into insurgent ranks, as well as the blockade of humanitarian supplies and services.

MALINOWSKI